

not cope as well, what can we do? We can offer solutions such as relaxation techniques. In his book *The Relaxation Response*, Dr. Herbert Benson extols the virtues of relaxing and meditating to cope with tension.⁶ Although meditating will not make your problems disappear, it can give you a different perspective. We can also encourage our patients and ourselves to have an optimistic and enthusiastic outlook on life. You should not underestimate the delight of simple pleasures, like rain or the price of coffee dropping 20 cents a pound. Even after the greatest personal defeats, the depressing thought of being a failure is best combated by taking stock of all your many past achievements. Such conscious stock-taking is most effective in reestablishing the personal self-confidence and motivation necessary for future success.¹ An optimistic frame of mind undoubtedly contributes to anybody's physical and emotional health.

All of us who graduate today have shown a great desire to learn and a strong sense of concern for the well-being of other people. We all expect to work hard meeting the challenges and frustra-

tions in helping our patients solve their own problems. Sir William Osler challenged his fellow physicians to maintain coolness and presence of mind under all circumstances, calmness amid storm, clearness of judgment in moments of grave peril; in short, to remain imperturbable in any situation.⁷ This is a difficult challenge, one that has caused many physicians much distress. Perhaps we, becoming physicians in 1977, should modify Osler's ideas to allow for greater releases of our emotional tension as a way of preventing ourselves from becoming overwhelmed with stress. In fact, this approach may be an important key to the medical challenge of coping with stress.

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The Towel Trick for Detecting Breast Carcinoma

DR. HODGKINSON: "The procedure consists of stretching a towel over the breast and palpating the breast in all directions directly over the towel, quickly sweeping the hand over the breast.

"The principle of the towel trick is probably somewhat the same as examining a breast with soaped hands . . . The towel trick has been found to be well adaptable to office practice for asymptomatic women and is a more fastidious technique than using soaped hands. I have experimented with various types of material, but I find that a freshly ironed, smooth hand towel, such as usually found in hospitals or offices, serves very satisfactorily.

"I have found the towel trick very valuable in detecting small breast masses that are difficult to feel otherwise. Often, the mass can first be located with a towel and then be detected easily by direct palpation. Although any type of smooth cloth material can be used for this examination, the hospital towel works very satisfactorily provided it is smooth and dry. I think that by incorporating this technique into the routine examination of breasts, it will be found of some value in detecting breast masses which are otherwise difficult to feel."

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